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**FORTÉ FORUMS REACH THOUSANDS OF WOMEN WITH
“THE MBA VALUE PROPOSITION”**

**10-City Tour in U.S. and Abroad Counters Core Concerns about
Business Careers**

September 12, New York – In keeping with its mission to inspire and direct women into business leadership positions, the Forté Foundation today launched its fourth annual series of Forté Forums presenting the “MBA Value Proposition” to thousands of prospective women MBA candidates in 10 cities in the U.S. and abroad.

The Forté Forums enable corporations and business schools to combat the negative perceptions women have about business school and careers, as revealed in the landmark research study, *Women and the MBA: Gateway to Opportunity*, looking at why women are under-represented in leading business schools (30%) compared with top-tier medical or law schools (44%).*

Among the concerns are that business is not flexible enough – of particular importance for women considering families exactly at the time they apply for business school, requires too high a financial commitment, and is not philosophically rewarding.

“Our members understand the urgent need to attract female talent to business schools and the workforce,” said Forté Executive Director Elissa Ellis. “That’s why they put aside competitive differences to forge solutions to the challenges that can dissuade women from business leadership.”

Since its founding in 2001 to address these issues, Forté membership has grown to 15 leading corporations, 24 top business schools in the U.S. and abroad, and influential non-profits such as the Committee of 200 and The Graduate Management Admission Council® (GMAC®).

Forté has reached thousands of MBA prospects through its Forté Forums, supported MBA candidates with nearly \$4 million in scholarships through the Forté Scholarship program, and provided hundreds of undergraduate students with professional development workshops through its annual Intern Symposiums and new undergraduate series of Leadership Launches.

(more)

"We have learned through our research that knowledge about business opportunities is only part of the formula - women must also gain access to strong business networks to succeed," added Edith A. Hunt, Forté Board of Directors Chair. Ms. Hunt is co-chief operating officer of the Human Capital Management Division at Goldman Sachs, responsible for global recruiting, training and diversity, and a member of the Partnership Committee.

Forté Foundation is the *only* organization that provides a national infrastructure for women to access the "real world" information, scholarship opportunities and essential networking connections they need to succeed in business careers.

The Forté Forums feature both senior role models and "Rising Stars," or recent alumnae of participating business schools, to communicate the flexibility and opportunities afforded by the MBA credential. The 2005 series will travel to New York; Boston; Washington, DC; Chicago; Atlanta; Dallas; Los Angeles; San Francisco; London, and Paris.

Amidst a national discussion on the viability of the workplace for women business leaders, the Forté Foundation is also seeking to support MBA alumnae. For example, Forté Foundation recently supported a study, **BACK IN THE GAME: Returning to Business after a Hiatus**, conducted under advisement from the Wharton Center for Leadership and Change, which offered a three-part prescription for corporations, universities and women to reverse the exodus of female talent from the large corporate workforce.

Demonstrating the power of the Forté partnership, thirteen of its corporate members or their parent companies appeared among *Fortune's* recent "50 Most Desirable MBA Employers." They are Citigroup; Credit Suisse First Boston; Dell, Inc.; Deutsche Bank; Eli Lilly; Ernst & Young LLP; Fidelity Investments; Goldman Sachs; IBM; JPMorgan Chase; Morgan Stanley; McKinsey & Company, and Kraft Foods.

To register or obtain more information, see www.fortefoundation.org.

Forté Member companies are: Capital Group Companies; Citigroup; Credit Suisse First Boston; Dell, Inc.; Deutsche Bank; Eli Lilly; Ernst & Young; Fidelity; Goldman Sachs; IBM; JPMorgan Chase; Kraft Foods, Inc.; McKinsey & Company; MetLife, and Morgan Stanley.

Forté Member business schools are: F.W. Olin Graduate School of Business at Babson College; Babcock Graduate School of Management at Wake Forest University; Columbia Business School; Darden Graduate School of Business Administration at University of Virginia; The Fuqua School of Business at Duke University; Goizueta Business School at Emory University; Harvard Business School; HEC-Paris; INSEAD; The Johnson School of Management at Cornell University; The Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University; Kelley School of Business at Indiana University; Kenan-Flagler Business School at the University of North Carolina; London Business School; Marshall School of Business at University of Southern California; McCombs School of Business at The University of Texas; Sloan School of Management at Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Stern School of Business at New York University; Tepper School of Business at Carnegie Mellon University; Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College; University of Chicago Graduate School of Business; Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan; The Wharton School at University of Pennsylvania, and Yale School of Management.

Forté Member non-profits are: The Graduate Management Admission Council® (GMAC®) and The Committee of 200.